

PETER

4. Willing but Weak

(Leader's Notes)



Introduction

Peter had known Jesus for three years and had been his disciple and constant companion for two of those years. He had learnt so much about Jesus, but he was also learning about himself. Isn't it true, that as we realize how wonderful Jesus is, we begin to realize how weak and sinful we really are? However Jesus only makes us aware of the truth about ourselves to draw us to him, so we realize we need him. That is the lesson we learn in this study.

A. WILLING

The disciples had been in the Upper Room with Jesus. They had celebrated the Jewish Passover together and Jesus had explained that his body and blood were to be given for the New Covenant. Jesus had said that one of his disciples would betray him and they were wondering who that would be. Now they were on their way to the Mount of Olives.

Scripture Reading: **Mark 14:22-31**

- ❖ What did Jesus say the disciples would do? V27
(*They would all flee.*)
- ❖ What do you think Jesus meant when he quoted the words, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered,"?
(*Jesus himself was the shepherd who would be struck and killed, and his sheep, the disciples, would scatter.*)
- ❖ How did Peter respond to Jesus' words? V29, 31
(*He declared that although the others would fall away, he would not. Even after Jesus said he would deny him, Peter reaffirmed his loyalty to Jesus more strongly.*)



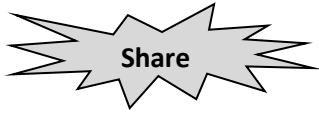
What does this incident reveal about Peter's nature? What can you learn from this story?
(*This story shows how Peter was so confident and sure of himself, but he did not realize his own weakness.*)

We are like Peter, some more than others! Some of us really love the Lord yet we can be so self-confident. Jesus wanted Peter to realize he was weak, so he would run to the Lord for strength and protection, but because of Peter's confidence in himself, he fell.

Scripture Reading: **Mark 14:32-42**

Peter was willing to do anything for the Lord, even die for him! However the first thing Jesus asked Peter was not to die.

- ❖ What did Jesus ask Peter to do, but what did he do? V32, 34, 37
(To watch, stay awake and alert and to pray. Instead he slept!)
- ❖ Why do you think Jesus particularly spoke to Peter, even though they all slept? V37-38
(Jesus knew what was about to happen to Peter.)



Peter and Jesus were both facing temptation, although what Jesus was facing was far greater. What is the key to overcoming temptation that Jesus had learnt and was trying to teach Peter? Share what has helped you in your Christian life to overcome temptation.
(Jesus knew that to overcome he would need strength from his Father, and so he spent his time in prayer. If we are going to walk in victory it is important to walk closely with the Lord and spend time in his presence.)

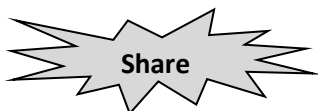
We all face temptations. Jesus was tempted in greater ways than any of us, yet he learnt to overcome. He is able to help us overcome too. Peter failed because he didn't watch and pray, but he learnt from this experience. See 1 Peter 5:8-9.

B. BUT WEAK

Scripture Reading: Mark 14:53-54, 66-72

Judas had betrayed Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees had taken him to be tried. All the disciples had fled, just as Jesus had said. V50

- ❖ Although the others fled, how did Peter show that perhaps he was the bravest disciple? V53-54
(We are told that the other disciples fled but Peter nearby, placing himself in possible danger.)
- ❖ Who asked Peter if he was a disciple? V66, 69, 70
(Two maids and a bystander.)



Why do you think Peter denied that he was a disciple? Have you ever faced a situation where it has been difficult to stand up for Christ? Share your experience.
(Peter was afraid of what they would do to him if he acknowledged knowing Jesus.)

- ❖ How was Peter reminded of what Jesus had said to him? V72, Luke 22:61
(He heard the cock crow three times just as Jesus said, then Jesus turned to look at Peter.)
- ❖ What proved Peter was truly sorry?
(Peter wept and turned back to Jesus, never denying him again.)

Conclusion

Peter really loved Jesus, although there were times when Jesus rebuked him and he failed. When the enemy sees a person is committed to Christ, he will seek to tempt him and draw him away. This is what Jesus said in Luke 22:31, "Satan has asked to sift you as wheat." The Lord allows this to happen so that the self-part of us is sifted out and the genuine remains.

Jesus knew that Peter's love for him was real and so he allowed Satan to test Peter. All of us will go through experiences where we may be tested. We may fail too, but God will teach us from these experiences, that although we are weak, he is strong. Just as Jesus prayed for Peter, he will pray for us too, that our faith will not fail. Hebrews 4:15 says, "We have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence ..."